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RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE 0076
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 1626
RUDKSR/EUCOM PLANS AND ANALYSIS STAFF STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/USCENTCOM POLITICAL ADVISOR MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 VILNIUS 000698

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PAR 3/4 CLASSIFICATION CHANGED)

SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/SRAP AMBASSADOR RICHARD HOLBROOKE AND PDAS PAUL JONES
STATE FOR EUR/NB, EUR/RPM, AND SCA/A HENRY ENSHER
EMBASSY KABUL FOR AMBASSADOR E ANTHONY WAYNE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/21/2019

TAGS: [MAPP](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: SPAIN, ITALY BILATERAL MEETINGS AT RC-WEST IN VILNIUS

REF: VILNIUS 695

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Classified By: A/DCM John M. Finkbeiner for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On December 8-9, Director of Office of Afghanistan Affairs Henry Ensher led a U.S. delegation comprised of U.S. officers posted to Herat and Ghor provinces, the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, USAID, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Joint Staff, CENTCOM and U.S. Embassy Vilnius to the Regional Command-West (RC-W) conference in Vilnius, Lithuania. Ensher, along with Brad Hanson, the Senior Civilian Representative for RC-W, met with heads of delegations from Italy and Spain (as well as with Lithuania, reported septel) in a series of bilateral discussions. The U.S. side focused on formalizing and improving means of support for U.S. civilians assigned to allied-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). Representatives for both Italy and Spain agreed to raise U.S. concerns with Rome and Madrid.

¶2. (C) The senior Italian representative raised the concern that growing the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) at an increased rate would be a greater waste of money and resources given the recruitment and retention issues that persist at current levels. Rather than focus on quantity at the expense of quality, the U.S. should instead focus on fixing the issues with the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP). The Italian representative expressed concern that the province of Farah might be taken out of RC-W and included in a new regional command to be formed after the arrival of the additional U.S. troops. The Spanish representative said her country would explore the idea of a civilian counterpart to COMISAF, but noted that Spain would find it difficult to accept a U.S. official in this role. END SUMMARY.

U.S./ITALY BILATERAL

¶3. (C) On December 8, Director of the Office of Afghanistan Affairs and Head of Delegation (HoD) to the RC-W Workshop Henry Ensher and Senior Civilian Representative for

RC-W Brad Hanson conducted a bilateral meeting with Italy on the margins of the RC-W Workshop. Carlo Batori, International Security Political-Military Counselor and Deputy Director in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Giuseppe Perricone, First Secretary of the Italian MFA and former MFA representative at PRT Herat represented Italy in this meeting.

¶4. (C) The discussion centered on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) proposed by Embassy Kabul to the Italian Ambassador in Kabul regarding the provision of support by Italy at PRT Herat to U.S. civilians. Batori asked for clarification regarding the numbers of anticipated United States Government (USG) civilians at Italian-commanded facilities and the status of the planned Herat consulate. Hanson first noted that the USG was responding to a long-time request by the Italians for a written MOU governing the presence of USG civilians at the Italian-led PRT. Hanson explained that there are currently three U.S. civilians working at PRT Herat (two State Department personnel and one from USAID). When the consulate in Herat opens, the two State officers will depart the PRT. The U.S. wants to keep one USAID officer at the PRT. Hanson also briefed on a proposal to the RC-W commander to post a USAID development advisor and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) advisor at RC-W Headquarters. The MOU would cover both locations. In addition, the U.S. may be asking the PRT to temporarily provide one or two Americans assigned to the consulate with accommodations for a few weeks or months before the consulate opens. The U.S. would like to see the MOU cover all of these U.S. personnel at both locations.

¶5. (C) Hanson indicated we would be submitting shortly to the Italian Embassy in Kabul a revised paragraph governing security and movement to reflect the reality that U.S. personnel will self-drive in Herat as they have in the past.

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Discussion ensued regarding possible security arrangements.

¶6. (C) Batori noted that these are issues for the Ministry of Defense (MoD) to answer, but that he would raise them with the general staff. They would be unwilling to accept an open-ended agreement, but he was pleased that Hanson specified the specific numbers for short- and long-term support. More specifically, regarding security, it would be difficult for the Italian military to provide it for U.S. personnel when it does not provide security for Italian civilians. Instead, security is provided by the Carabinieri -- which also explains why it would be impossible for the U.S. to buy a portion of the security contract as was done with the British in the South.

¶7. (C) Hanson asked that threat information be provided to the USG civilians and that, in extremis, if the PRT is not able to provide a quick reaction force (QRF), that it facilitate communication between a USG civilian in a life-threatening situation with others who might provide a QRF. Hanson also noted that with the opening of a consulate, there would be new USG security resources to help protect USG civilians.

¶8. (C) Regarding the sharing of threat information, Batori noted that sharing threat information is a "two-way street" and that if agreed to, the U.S. civilians at PRT Herat should also provide Italy with U.S. threat analyses. Hanson noted that he already shares specific threat information coming his way with the PRT. PRT Herat now has a U.S. military liaison, who could also provide the PRT with classified threat information. Furthermore, a Regional Security Officer (RSO) will be part of the consulate staff, and he/she will work hard to develop good relations with PRT security colleagues, including sharing threat information.

¶9. (C) Regarding the QRF request, Batori doubted this could be arranged formally because priority in such a situation

would be given to the safety of Italian and ISAF military personnel and that the ability to respond would be dictated by events. Batori said he would take this to the MoD and urge a solution that would be as open as possible.

¶10. (C) Regarding Italy's troop increase, Batori said Italy will cap their number at 4,000 but that in reality, there might be more. Currently, Italy has around 3,100 troops in Afghanistan. Of the 4,000 Italy expects to have in Afghanistan, most will be in RC-W, with a few hundred in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif.

¶11. (C) Ensher suggested that the brevity of Italian civilian tours diminishes their potential effectiveness. Batori and Perricone both acknowledged this, but noted the difficulty of finding qualified personnel to go to Afghanistan, making the recycling of personnel a necessary, but admittedly imperfect, solution.

¶12. (C) Batori was very concerned about Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) attrition and retention rates, especially given how much time and money had been invested in this particular part of the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF). He pointed to the under-utilized capacity at the Adraskan National Training Center in Herat province. Rather than grow the ANSF at a rate that guarantees quantity over quality, the U.S. should consider making retention of ANCOP a priority issue.

¶13. (C) Batori proposed that our focus should be on elite units that can add value rather than going for sheer quantity. Hammering out the problems with ANCOP should take precedence. Hanson proposed that pay scales should reflect the education and literacy of entering recruits both to attract higher quality personnel and to help with retention.

¶14. (C) Batori noted that the Italian military is very concerned about the rumors of taking Farah out of RC-W. Many of Italy's new troops could potentially go to Farah and if

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Farah is taken from RC-W, the decision would be very difficult to support in Rome.

U.S./SPAIN BILATERAL

¶15. (C) On December 9, 2009, Ensher and Hanson also conducted a bilateral meeting on the margins of the RC-W workshop with Spain. Spanish Counselor to NATO Teresa Orjales Vidal represented Spain in this meeting.

¶16. (C) Ensher asked what Spain thinks about a civilian analogue to COMISAF. Vidal said that the issue needs to be discussed and that there has not been enough time to evaluate generally the idea of a civilian coordinator. However, she offered that although she appreciates the fact that most of the military and civilian effort in Afghanistan comes from the U.S., perceptions matter. If the U.S. leads the civilian effort as it does in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), there will appear to be no balance and this will affect public opinion.

¶17. (C) Vidal said that the additional military contributions will total roughly 220 military personnel, as well as some number of additional civilians.

¶18. (C) Hanson raised the MOU proposed to the Spanish ambassador in Kabul regarding the provision of support by Spain at PRT Badghis to U.S. civilians. Hanson explained that the U.S. would like to propose the addition of a USDA expert and a second USAID officer to add to the officers already there from the State Department and USAID -- increasing the number of U.S. civilians at PRT Badghis to four. The proposed MOU is an attempt to respond to some

allies, desire for a written MOU governing the presence of U.S. personnel at PRTs. However, it is understood that some particulars will need to be individually crafted as the circumstances of PRTs vary. Specifically, the U.S. may have a revision regarding self-drive.

¶19. (C) In all cases, Vidal said she would take these discussions back to Madrid.
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